

Dyslexic Advantage Newsletter

A photograph of a Zen garden featuring concentric ripples in the sand and several smooth, rounded stones. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light, creating a sense of calm and focus.

**DISCOVERING
DYSLEXIA
AS AN ADULT**

- **BENEFITS AND COSTS OF COMPENSATED DYSLEXIA**
- **WHY SPEECH-TO-TEXT IS SUDDENLY MUCH BETTER**
- **DYSLEXIA NEWS**



Dyslexic Advantage is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and one of the world's largest online communities for dyslexia.

Dear Dyslexic Advantage Friends,
 Congratulations to all graduates and their families! You've worked so hard all year and accomplished so much.

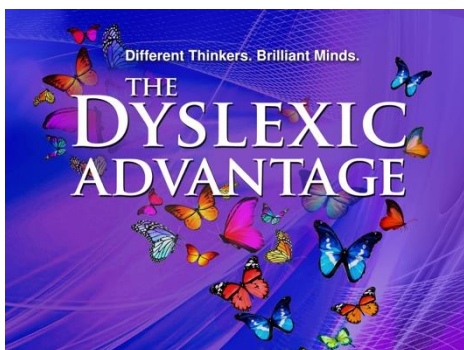
This month's issues touch on Discovering Dyslexia as an Adult, The Benefits and Costs of Compensated Dyslexia, advantages in speech-to-text software, and dyslexia news that includes ongoing problems with schools and reading scores and protests against the widely adopted I-ReadyReading program. If you have any suggestions for upcoming topics, let us know!

Fernette Eide MD p.s. Teachers we have a new [clock hour course for spelling](#)
 7 clock hours for \$20 - premium members only

Check out past premium articles and issues in our online [library](#) and [premium archives](#). We're also reorganizing our premium video archives and all will be searchable through the blue microphone at DyslexicAdvantage.org

Thanks to our amazing editorial team: Trish Seres, Shelley Wear, Cheryl Kahn, Jack Martin, Lady Grace Belarmino, and Michelle Williams.

WATCH THE MOVIE AND SHARE IT WITH YOUR SCHOOL



Teachers, don't forget we have mini-courses for reading, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, spelling, STEM and social-emotional [here](#).

If you have any trouble logging into your account or need to cancel: team@dyslexicadvantage.org

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DISCOVERING DYSLEXIA AS AN ADULT



Almost every week we hear from adults who have newly discovered they are dyslexic. The stories are all different. Some begin with a child's school struggles. Some begin with a workplace evaluation, a college accommodation request, or a chance encounter with a description of dyslexia that finally sounds familiar. Some adults have known for years that reading, spelling, paperwork, forms, or rapid written output took far more effort than it seemed to take other people, but they never had a name for why.

Dyslexia itself is not new. The first widely cited medical accounts appeared in the late 1800s, including William Pringle Morgan's 1896 report of a bright child with "congenital word blindness." Modern dyslexia history often begins there, with the striking observation that a child could be intelligent, observant, and capable, while still struggling severely with print.

What is new is the public, legal, and educational recognition of dyslexia. Federal special education law began to change in 1975, when Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, guaranteed children with disabilities a free appropriate public education. That law later became IDEA. Today, IDEA's definition of "specific learning disability" explicitly includes dyslexia. But for many families, the word itself still remained surprisingly hard to get schools to say. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education issued guidance clarifying that schools are not prohibited from using terms such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia in evaluations, eligibility decisions, or IEP documents.

State dyslexia identification laws are also relatively recent. Texas became the first state to pass a general education dyslexia law in 1985, requiring screening and treatment for dyslexia and related disorders. Many other state laws, handbooks, screening requirements, and teacher training efforts came much later, especially over the past decade or two.

Civil rights protections also developed gradually. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act provide protection from discrimination for people with disabilities, including people whose reading, writing, learning, or related functions are substantially limited. The ADA was first

enacted in 1990 and broadened by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, which took effect in 2009. Later regulations and guidance made it clearer that learning disabilities could affect major life activities such as reading, writing, concentrating, thinking, and learning.

This timeline matters because many adults who are only now discovering dyslexia grew up before today's screening laws, teacher training efforts, and public awareness campaigns. They may have been called careless, slow, lazy, messy, resistant, or not college material. Some were placed in low reading groups but never understood why. Others were bright enough to compensate, so their struggles were minimized. They worked harder, stayed up later, memorized around the problem, avoided situations that exposed spelling or reading speed, or built lives around their strengths without realizing how much energy they were spending to hide their difficulties.

When dyslexia is discovered in adulthood, the first response is often mixed. There may be relief: "Finally, this makes sense." There may be grief: "Why didn't anyone see this earlier?" There may be anger about missed opportunities, unnecessary shame, or years of being misunderstood. There may also be sadness for the child or young adult they once were, trying to succeed without the right explanation or tools.

Those feelings are real. They deserve space. But they are not the end of the story.

A dyslexia discovery can also open a new chapter of self-understanding. It can help adults reinterpret their histories with more accuracy and less self-blame. It can explain why they may have struggled with reading speed, spelling, sequencing, memorizing isolated facts, or getting thoughts onto paper quickly, while also showing unusual strengths in reasoning, visual-spatial thinking, pattern recognition, storytelling, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, design, science, strategy, empathy, or big-picture understanding.

This is at the heart of the Dyslexic Advantage view. Dyslexia is not simply a list of school-based weaknesses. It is a different learning and thinking profile, with challenges that can be very real, but also with strengths that are often overlooked when schools focus too narrowly on early print skills. Many dyslexic children and adults are strong at seeing relationships, imagining possibilities, making connections across fields, noticing what others miss, and learning through meaning, experience, and purpose.

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For parents, discovering dyslexia in a child can also become a mirror. Many adults first recognize themselves while sitting in a school meeting, reading an evaluation, or watching their child struggle with the same kinds of tasks that once made them feel inadequate. This can be painful, but it can also be powerful. A parent who understands dyslexia from the inside can become an extraordinary guide. They can help a child see that difficulty with reading or spelling is not the same thing as lack of intelligence. They can recognize strengths earlier. They can advocate for instruction and accommodations without allowing a child's whole identity to be defined by deficits.

Teacher training is essential, and we strongly support efforts to help teachers recognize dyslexia, provide effective reading instruction, and understand the needs of dyslexic learners. We are also planning a teacher-focused course to help educators better understand dyslexic students, not only as struggling readers, but as whole learners with distinctive profiles of challenge and strength.

But the understanding of parents may be the most important support of all. Parents shape the story children tell themselves about who they are. They notice strengths that may not appear on school reports. They can protect confidence while still seeking effective instruction. They can help children understand that support is not a sign of weakness, and that dyslexic minds often develop through different pathways.

This summer, we hope to offer a new self-paced self-discovery course for adults and families who are exploring dyslexia in themselves or in someone they love. The course is being designed to help participants reflect on their own learning histories, understand common dyslexic patterns, recognize strengths, and begin to reframe old experiences with greater clarity and compassion.

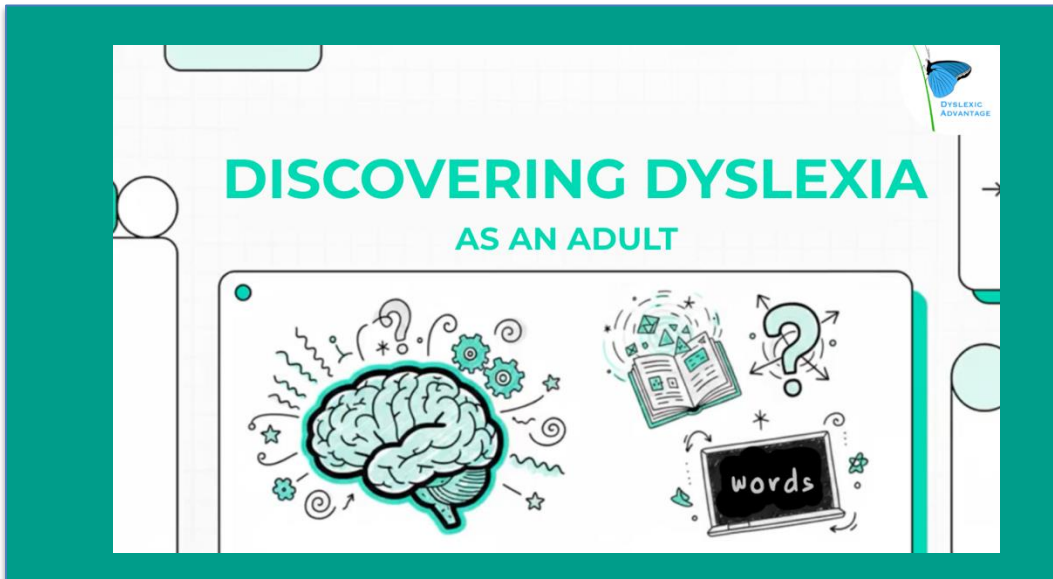
We would love your input as we build it. What would have helped you when you first discovered dyslexia? What questions did you have? What emotions surprised you? What tools, reflections, videos, examples, or exercises would make a self-paced course most useful?

If you are interested in the course, or if you would like to suggest ideas for its design, please sign up here: [\[insert link\]](#)

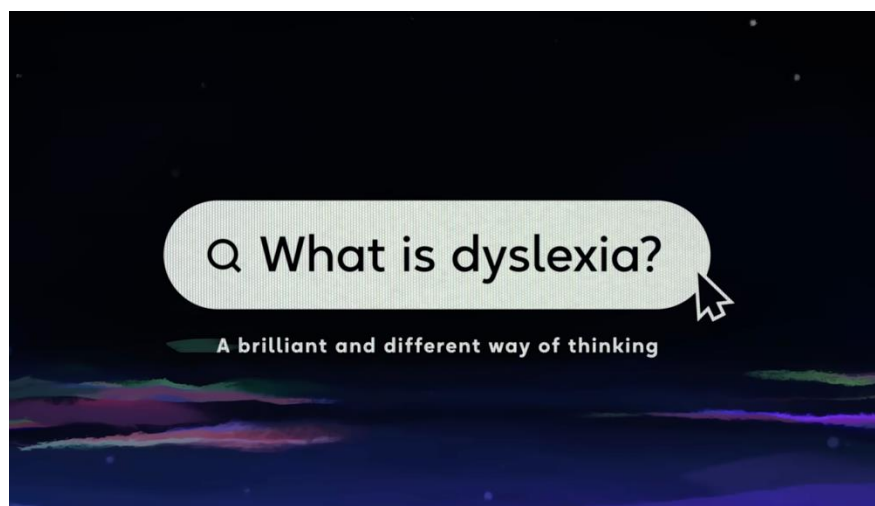
Discovering dyslexia later in life can bring regret. But it can also bring recognition. It can turn a lifetime of scattered clues into a coherent story. And for many adults, that story is not only about difficulty. It is also about resilience, insight, creativity, and the long-overdue discovery of a mind that was working differently all along.

Videos: [Discovering Dyslexia as an Adult](#)

A brief explainer video we made to help explore why many adults only discover that they're dyslexic as adults



[What is Dyslexia](#) - new video from the UK



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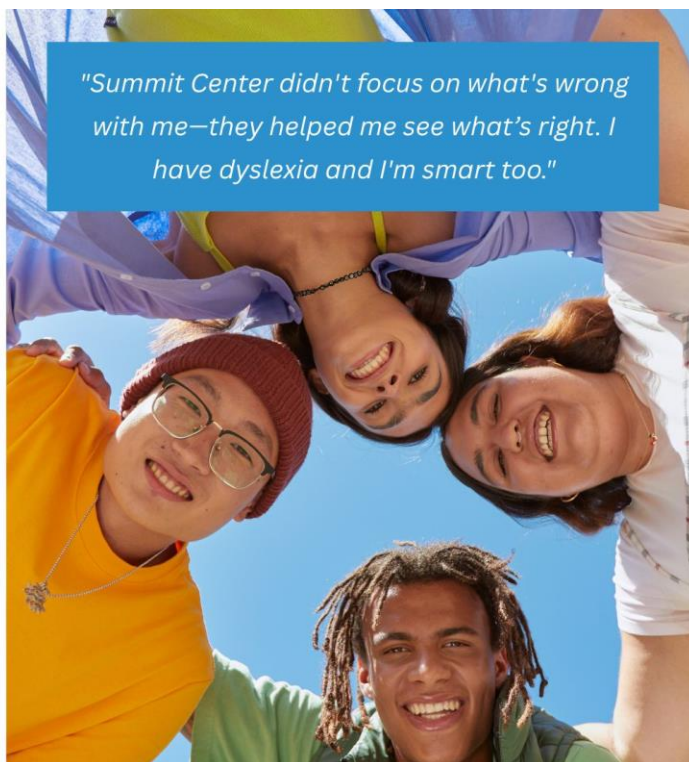
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THE BENEFITS AND THE COSTS OF COMPENSATED DYSLEXIA



Many dyslexics become masters of compensation—developing strategies that let them thrive in school, careers, and life. One of the most common, but double-edged tools is over-preparation. What looks like extraordinary dedication from the outside may stem from a fear of being “found out,” looking unprepared, or making visible errors. This drive fuels success but carries hidden costs: exhaustion, burnout, anxiety, and the weight of having to work harder than others to keep up.

OVER-PREPARATION

**" For me, it wasn't luck, and it wasn't real estate. It was hustle." -
Barbara Corcoran**

Shark Tank investor and real estate lead Barbara Corcoran credits her "over-compensation" to her business success.

"I learned that the fear of looking stupid turned me into an adult who over-prepared for everything I ever did, and so I was better prepared and succeeded and excelled against people who were a lot smarter than me simply because I tried harder."

Examples of her "over-preparation" included extensive research before any business meeting or negotiation, so that she knew the property, market (context) and used that to silence her inner critic. It allowed her to make data-driven bids and decisions like offering 88 unwanted apartments at once and creating a market rush.

"Initially each morning was a massive challenge, I had so much to do and needed to focus *relentlessly* in order to get started." - Ben Worthington, IELTS Podcast

Ben Worthington is a dyslexic entrepreneur who is in a business that many would think might be one of the worst fits for dyslexic thinkers - preparation of the English language proficiency tests for non-English speakers.

Dyslexia is commonly referred to as language learning disability - how could Ben be a superstar at teaching it? There's a logic behind this. When people learn English as their first language, they may acquire phonetics, spelling, and grammar indirectly - almost without thinking. Dyslexic English speakers may, however, have to be taught certain aspects of the English language directly. They may ultimately be better at teaching English Language Learners (ELL) because they have had to break down the rules, and learn it the hard way themselves.

From Ben's [interview](#) at the University of Michigan

"Making lists

Everyday I write out my goals for the year, the quarter, the month, the week, and the day! (Mr. List)

Meditation

Imagine your mind is a bowl of spaghetti. Meditation for me straightens it all out and back into straight solid pasta sticks. Delicious!

Mindmap everything!

I hardly realize I am doing it nowadays. If my mind is full of noise, I just dump it all into a mindmap. This frees up resources to focus. I use [Dean Jackson's 50 minute Focus Finder](#) technique."

Dean's 50 minute focus finder techniques is a little like the morning pages in Julia Cameron's [Artist's Way](#). Julia's morning pages were to take place first thing in the morning. Jack's 50-minute blocks involved a rhythm of 50-20-50 to minimize multitasking and distraction.

The idea is to block out 2 hours of the work day by dividing that into 50-20-50 minutes. The first 50 can be focused uninterrupted work time, the next 20 is a recharge time (nap, stretch, walk), and second 50 free-range thought time where email and to do items can be addressed.

The compensatory part of this is metacognitive and planning - other people may be able to survive just letting their day happen, but many dyslexic people do better if they plan for how they work best.

When Ben first got his start as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language in a classroom, he reflected:

"...it was terrifying. I was so scared I would misspell something on the blackboard. Fortunately, though I changed this to my advantage: I over-prepared for the class - each session had a plan, and tricky spellings were foreseen and dealt with beforehand."

OVER-LEARNING

Long ago in the earliest days of Dyslexic Advantage, I had the pleasure of connecting with a computer guy, Eric McCormick who shared what he learned from returning to school as an adult. Like over-preparing, over-learning was a tool that he used to learn information inside and out.

"...I have a very good GPA. There is a simple trick I use to do that, and I thought I would pass it on in case anyone ever wants to try crushing a topic the way I do. The short of it is to know the topic before you take the class..."

There are plenty of YouTube and other videos made by college professors on most topics. I watch them as often and for as long as I can tolerate. (Usually on an exercise bicycle to keep the blood pumping, which makes me more awake!) With the rapid watching, day after day, there is not enough time for me to really forget everything. But there is so much--so fast and without any books or homework to reinforce it--that there is no way to remember it all. However, I do get an excellent feel for the topic. I learn terms, see parts that confuse me or make sense, and have an overview.

Then, when I am actually in the class, there is nothing 100% new. I am hearing something a second time, a little different than the first time, but without the overload of trying to absorb so much new stuff at once.

Depending on how you learn, this may or may not help. I get a lot more out of hearing a lecture than I do out of reading a book. I bet the same is true for a lot of dyslexics, which means that the tactic of having a second lecture, by a different teacher, could be a big help. And if there is something I do not get at all while doing the intense watching, I have a chance to look it up then, before class, and try and make more sense of it. Or, I can wait and see if it will be covered in the class, talk to the teacher, or see about going to the tutoring center, another video, and so on."

Now some of you may say - what? It's already so hard doing so much for school. Watch something about the subject twice?

Eric's strategy for success in higher education. takes out some of the lock-step quality of traditional schooling. Like many people we've spoken to over the years, Eric went back to school after having worked for a while. Traditional school may make a dyslexic student feel like they're always behind others and struggling to keep up. Reframing that, it may also be a mismatch between how they are taught and how they learn best.

A mismatched school experience may involve instruction that is too fast in real time (especially if they're expected to take notes and cannot do so), present too few examples of cases or problems that they will be expected to address, give them too many homework problems that go beyond what they need to understand and require more than they can physically complete. As a result, if after a checkered school career a student still wants to go back to school but on their terms - and especially in their area of interest- they can find that there's a way to succeed - and ultimately come out of the process knowing subjects more deeply than many others.

THE COSTS OF OVER-PREPARATION AND OVER-LEARNING

There are real consequences that arise from the extra work of over-preparation and over-learning, so it's best to make strategic choices to maintain your health and, in so doing, optimize your likelihood for success.

Many, if not all, high-achieving dyslexic people have to battle mental and physical fatigue, burnout, anxiety, and the weight of working harder than almost anybody else.

SELF-CARE

With all the extra burdens, its important to build in and protect real recovery. Times of "brain rest", use of physical and social outlets to keep your mental and physical well-being. Many in our community find mindfulness, movement, or creative outlets (the very strengths dyslexia often brings) help release tension. Don't hesitate to lean on technology, accommodations, friends and family members, trusted colleagues, or mentors who will support you.

THE BENEFITS OF THE EXTRA WORK

Yes, the extra work can lead to burnout and exhaustion, but it can also lead to resilience, deep knowledge, empathy, and the ability to outperform in high-stakes situations. Many dyslexic leaders, entrepreneurs, and professionals turn this trait into a signature strength: thoroughness, creativity under constraint, and the habit of seeing around corners.

FOR OUR COMMUNITY:

Would you like to share your story about being dyslexic and the lessons or experiences you learned from it?

Did you overlearn or overprepare? What were the benefits and the costs? What advice would you give to others today?

If you receive our magazines through Substack, then you can reply to that email and share your story.

You can also dictate or type your story at this [LINK](#).

WHY SPEECH TO TEXT IS SUDDENLY MUCH BETTER



If you had excitedly tried speech-to-text some years ago, you may have been disappointed. Early dictation systems often promised far more than they delivered. Users had to speak unnaturally slowly, manually dictate punctuation (“comma ... period ... new paragraph”), and constantly correct bizarre substitutions that altered sentence meaning. Even worse, many of the mistakes looked plausible at first glance. A wrong homonym or slightly incorrect phrase could completely alter the meaning of a paragraph while remaining difficult to spot during proofreading.

For many dyslexic students and adults, this created a frustrating paradox. The very people who most needed support with writing and transcription often found speech-to-text impossible to edit. Some abandoned it entirely after a few discouraging experiences.

But over the past several years, something important has changed.

Newer AI-assisted speech systems are dramatically better than earlier generations of dictation software. While no system is perfect, many people who once gave up on speech-to-text may be surprised at how usable it has become.

The improvement is not simply that computers hear words more accurately. Increasingly, modern systems use context, language prediction, pause patterns, and large language models to infer meaning and sentence structure. Instead of merely converting sounds into isolated words, newer systems attempt to understand language more like a conversation.

This has led to major improvements in automatic punctuation, sentence flow, and contextual word prediction. Earlier systems often produced long unpunctuated blocks of text or inserted incorrect but believable substitutions that required exhausting proofreading. Newer systems increasingly recognize pauses and sentence boundaries automatically, creating drafts that sound far more natural and readable.

Many dyslexic students and adults have significantly stronger oral expression than written transcription speed. Teachers and parents often notice that a student can explain an idea brilliantly in conversation yet struggle to produce a short written paragraph. Adults describe similar experiences in the workplace: strong ideas during meetings, but difficulty translating those thoughts into written communication quickly and efficiently. The issue is often not intelligence or understanding. It is hidden cognitive load.

Writing requires many processes to occur simultaneously: generating ideas, organizing thoughts, spelling, punctuation, keyboarding, rereading, self-monitoring, and remembering what comes next. For dyslexic individuals, these lower-level demands can consume enormous mental energy. By the time the mechanics of writing are managed, the original idea may already feel fragmented or exhausted.

By freeing mental energy for thinking, less effort will be needed for transcribing thoughts into printed words, making more energy available for imagination, reflection, reasoning, storytelling, and organization

People may also find their own ways to work with speech-to-text; so may talk aloud to themselves or talk through their ideas while driving or walking. With AI programs, it's also possible to ramble aloud ideas and have AI models like ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or Grok organize, critique, summarize, or expand on what you say.

A majority of dyslexic adults seem to prefer separating idea generation and brainstorming from editing and proofreading, so text to speech along with an AI platform can work especially well.

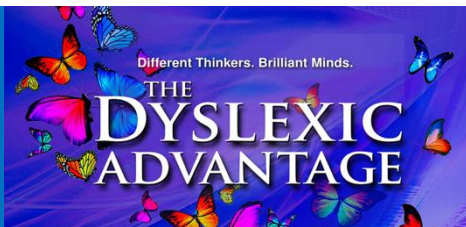
So if you haven't tried speech-to-text in a while, it may be a good idea to try it again. The best part is it's free on every major platform

Speech to Text Systems:

Apple ([iPhone](#), [iPad](#), [Mac Dictate](#)),
Microsoft ([Windows](#) and [Word Dictate](#))
Google ([Android](#) and [Google Docs](#)).

DYSLEXIA NEWS

Watch Now



[State of Dyslexia in 2026](#)

National Center for Improving Literacy
Psychology Today



[Dyslexic Thinking Made Me the Scientist I am Today](#) [The Guardian](#)

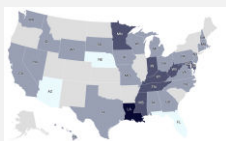


The Revolt Against I-Ready

NBC News
Discovery Education



[Austin Dyslexia Rate Reaches 23%](#) Austin Current



[Reading Scores Continue to Decline](#) AP News

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"My mother is an amazing woman. Not only did she manage the entire household, she noticed a gift in each of her kids and instilled confidence in all of us that the gift would take us wherever we wanted to go."

- Barbara Corcoran